

BV

811

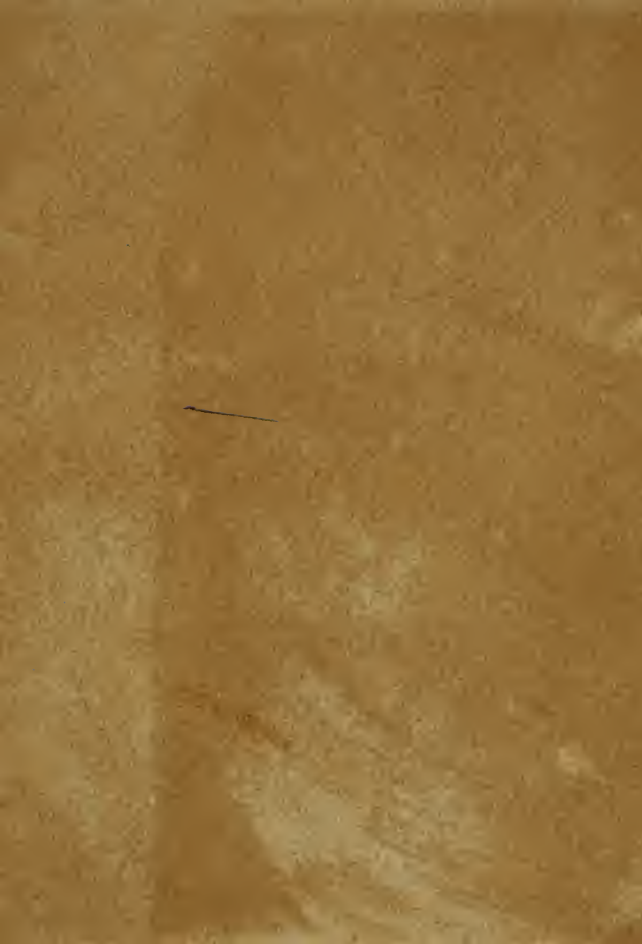
.Z444



Division **D-25**

Section **2383**

No. **113**



LECTURES
ON
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,

✓
BY HENRY ZELL,
Rector of St. James' Church, Knowlton.

"The promise is unto you, and to your children."

BELVIDERE:
PRINTED BY WM. B. BRITTAIN.
1841.

"JESUS SANCTIFIED BAPTISM, BEING HIMSELF BAPTIZED, SINCE THE SON OF GOD WAS BAPTIZED, WHAT BELIEVER CAN DESPISE BAPTISM? HE, HOWEVER, WAS BAPTIZED, NOT TO RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, FOR HE WAS SINLESS; BUT BEING SINLESS, TO GRANT DIVINE GRACE, AND DIGNITY TO THE BAPTIZED."

ST. CYRIL.

PREFACE.

IN performing the duties which appertain to my calling as a Minister of the Church of Christ, it has been my lot to meet with many whose views on the subject of Baptism, I consider to be erroneous. Some view this sacrament, which was instituted by Christ, and which ought therefore at least to command our respect, as of little consequence; while others are of the opinion that it ought not to be administered to infants, and that immersion is essential to its validity. For the instruction of the people of my charge,—the members of Zion Church, Belvidere, and St. James' Church, Knowlton,—the following Lectures, referring particularly to the necessity of receiving baptism where it may be had, the persons to whom, and the manner in which it ought to be administered, were prepared amid the multifarious duties of two parishes, without the remotest idea of their publication. It is superfluous to remark, that there are many excellent treatises in which the points discussed in the following remarks have been more fully and ably presented,—such for instance as Jeram's conversations on, and Wall's History of Infant Baptism, which are standard works;—

but unless the author is greatly mistaken, the works which we have on the subject of baptism are defective at least in one respect—sufficient importance is not given to the different points connected with this sacrament on which christians in the ordinary walks of life desire to be instructed, who have neither time to read, nor means to procure the more voluminous and expensive works which have been written.—This defect it is to be hoped is removed in part by these lectures;—which are now made public at the solicitation of my parishoners, whose names will ever be held in grateful remembrance;—and which are intended neither for the learned nor curious, but plain christians, who are diligently seeking the “old paths” that they may walk therein. That such by a perusal of this little volume, may be led to a “knowledge of the truth, and enabled to give to every one that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear,” is the fervent prayer of the author.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

The obligation to receive Baptism established from Scripture—the uniform practice of the Church during the Apostles ministry, their express commandments, and from the nature of that ordinance.

LECTURE II.

Infant Baptism established—the promises of God extended to children under the patriarchal dispensation—under the Jewish—Circumcision instituted; its design; obligations assumed thereby—one Church under several dispensations—Baptism instituted in the place of Circumcision.

LECTURE III.

Infant Baptism—analogy between Baptism and Circumcision—these ordinances differ in some respects—prophecies relating to the extension of the Church—its blessings designed for all. The Apostles understood the command to baptize in its most comprehensive sense—the command examined—facts in

the New Testament favour Infant baptism—command for it, households baptized—the holy seed—the serious difficulties attending the opposite theory.

LECTURE IV.

Proofs that Infant baptism was practised by the primitive Christians—testimony of Justin Martyr--of Irenæus—of Origen—of Tertullian—Council of Carthage—controversy between Pelagius and Augustine--remarks on this testimony—objections answered.

LECTURE V.

Mode of baptism immaterial, shown by the nature of that ordinance, and by analogy—command indefinite—mode never designated—the word baptize examined—baptism on the day of Pentecost—Eunuch baptized by Philip—the jailor baptized—conclusion adopted from the preceding remarks—objections answered—concluding remarks.

LECTURES
ON
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

LECTURE I.

The obligation to receive Baptism established from Scripture—the uniform practice of the Church during the Apostles ministry, their express commandments, and from the nature of that ordinance.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”—Matt. xxviii. 19. 20.

There is no subject more intimately connected with man's dearest interests and hopes in this world, and in the world to come, than a correct and scriptural understanding of those doctrines which are contained in the word of God. Time and experience without serious injury will generally correct erroneous opinions in political, civil, or scientific matters but in religion a misapprehension may prove fatal.—Prejudiced in favour of theories which cannot be sustained, and adopting conclusions not warranted by the sacred Scriptures, it requires more than ordinary effort to force conviction on the mind, that the commandments of men have been received instead of the doctrines of inspiration, and after error has been removed by the simple and clear manifestation of the truth, the aid of the Holy Spirit alone can lead to the adoption of a corresponding course of conduct. From this arises the necessity of great caution, and care, on the part of those who have been appointed stewards of the manifold grace of God, lest by reason of prejudice, or an unwillingness to abandon a favorite, and perhaps popular tenet, the doctrines

which they maintain, may not in all things be warranted by the word of God. It becomes us, therefore, as wise master builders, fervently imploring the blessing of Almighty God, before adopting any opinion and advocating it as revealed truth, to search the scriptures diligently; with an earnest desire to “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” its sacred truths; comparing spiritual things with spiritual, whereby difficulties may be removed, apparent contradictions reconciled, and things hard to be understood, explained; but when certain conclusions have been formed, as to the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, by withholding what we believe to be taught by the word of God, we would prove recreant to that sacred trust which has been committed to us, and render ourselves unworthy of confidence and regard. Situated thus, accountable to the Church here, and the Judge of all the earth hereafter, for the improvement of every talent which has been committed to us, we cannot but proclaim what we believe to be the will of God. Under the influence of these impressions, we ask your serious attention to the topics suggested by the

following words: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

I. These words conclusively show, that Christian Baptism is obligatory upon all to the end of time.

1. The object of our blessed Saviour's mission was to "seek and save those who were lost." For that end, He gave his life a ransom for all, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life," and subsequent to his resurrection, and immediately before his ascension—he commanded the eleven Apostles, to go, and "teach all nations, baptizing them," or as that expression is explained, by many eminent divines, "disciple all nations, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever had been commanded." From this we may perceive, that baptism is an essential part of divine

truth; and from the promise, “lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,” the conclusion is inevitable, that the successors of the Apostles, in the ministerial office, to the end of time, are to insist on baptism. Saint Mark, is very explicit on this point—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” xvi. 16. Hence we lay it down as a rule, conscientiously to be observed, wherever the Gospel is preached, and received as worthy of all acceptation, baptism is to be administered in the name of the blessed Trinity. What may be the condition of those in the world to come, who reject baptism, we know not, as the Bible is silent on that subject. Of this, however, we may rest assured, if we love God and keep his commandments, an abundant entrance shall be ministered into that rest which remains for the people of God. “If Christ himself” as the judicious Hooker observes “who giveth salvation do require baptism: it is not for us, that look for salvation, to sound and examine him, whether unbaptized men may be saved, but seriously to do the thing that is required; and religiously

to fear the danger which may grow by the want thereof."

2. That baptism is obligatory, is evident also from the uniform practice of the Church, during the ministry of the Apostles. Thus for example, we learn from the second chapter of Acts, when the truth was faithfully dispensed on the day of Pentecost by St. Peter, "they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." In like manner, we find by consulting the eighth Chapter of Acts, that Philip, who a short time previously had been ordained a deacon in the Church of God,—faithful in the performance of those duties which devolved on him,—went down to the city of Samaria, and "preached Christ unto them; and the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." But they did not deem this of sufficient consequence to save them, or place the means of grace and hopes of glory within their reach, without complying with the ordinances of the gospel—the sacred writer continues, "when

they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.”

In the same chapter is another instance equally explicit as to the necessity of baptism, which is briefly as follows:—“A man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure had come to Jerusalem for to worship, and returning in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet, and Philip ran to him and said, understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, how can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come and sit with him. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus.—And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, see here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest; and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and they both went down into the wa-

ter, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." In like manner, after Paul's conversion, "he arose and was baptized." Cornelius, and those that were with him—impressed by the preaching of St. Peter, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost—were "baptized in the name of the Lord." On the conversion of Lydia "she was baptized and her household." Chap. xvi. 15. The Jailor "was baptized, he and all his, straightway," as soon as they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Chap. xvi. 33. It is a correct rule of interpretation, which is applicable to laws—human or divine, that whenever difficulty arises as to the meaning, or design of any precept, to refer to the course of conduct, adopted by those who first made it a rule of action; and if that can be satisfactorily ascertained, to explain it thereby. From the actions and opinions of those who continued in the Apostle's "fellowship and doctrine," the Apostle's belief may be ascertained, while at the same time, we are to be influenced not a little by their belief and practice, in explaining the doctrines of Christ. An apt illustration of the correctness of these remarks, is to be found

in the form of Church government which we, in common with our forefathers, from time immemorial, have adopted. It is thought by many, that the declarations of our blessed Lord on this subject, are so indefinite, that every form of church government, adopted at the present day, is alike of divine origin. But when we refer to the Apostles, this doubt is removed. We find that there then existed, “divers orders” in the ministry, answering to our Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, that the superior order, vested first in Apostles, and subsequently in bishops, alone ordained to the work of the ministry; and that their jurisdiction extended over several churches, for which they were required to ordain ministers of proper qualifications to teach; and of which they were to take the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly—not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind—as was the case with Timothy, bishop of Ephesus, and Titus, bishop of Crete:—from these facts, found in the Acts, and the different Epistles of Paul and Peter, we arrive at the conclusion, that the Episcopal form of Church government is agreeable to the will of Christ,

even admitting that his declarations on that topic are somewhat indefinite.* These observations are equally applicable to baptism; for when we find that the Apostles, acting by the authority delegated to them by Christ, invariably baptized those that believed, with *water*, we are confirmed in the belief, of the necessity of receiving the “washing of regeneration,” as well as the “renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

III. Nor is this another doctrine, than that which the Apostles themselves preached. “Repent,” says St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, to those that were pricked in their hearts, and said to Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, men and brethren what shall we do? “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God, shall call.” “Baptism,” says the same

* This subject is fully discussed in a little work of rare merit entitled, “Episcopacy tested by Scripture, by Bishop Henry U. Onderdonk,”—published by the New York Episcopal Tract Society.

Apostle, in another place, “doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” 1. Pet. 111. 21. “According to his mercy, he saved us,” says Titus, speaking of Christ, “by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” Tit. 111. 5. Hence the doctrine of baptism is designated by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, as one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Religion, Heb. vi. 2.

IV. The importance of receiving baptism is evident, fourthly, from the *nature* of that ordinance. The opinion is adopted by many, that the sacraments instituted by Christ are of little consequence, if the heart be right in the sight of God. But it may be inquired, and the question is of serious consequence, if the heart is properly affected by divine grace, and an earnest desire is manifested to be partakers “of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,” will any of those ordinances which Christ hath enjoined be undervalued, or set at nought? It does not follow, that they are useless appendages to reli-

gion,—mere externals which may be observed or rejected according to circumstances or inclination—because they do not save the soul. There is no merit in repentance, and yet it is impossible to be saved without it—“except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” Humility, which is as a pearl of inestimable value, and “without which whosoever liveth is accounted dead before God,” does not save, and yet it is an essential grace of the christian character:—“God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble.” While, therefore, we are not saved by works,—“by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”—“good works which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ;” among which the ordinances of Christ’s appointment are pre-eminent. Seriously impressed with this truth, we solicit your attention to the importance and necessity of Holy Baptism, “where it may be had.” We may be greatly assisted in forming a scriptural idea of the nature of this sacrament, and the duties resulting therefrom, by referring to that rite which pre-

ceded it in the Jewish church. By circumcision, every male child, at eight days old, entered into covenant with Almighty God, became a member of his church militant, was justly entitled to all the privileges of church-membership, and received assurance, that an abundant enterance should be ministered into the rest which remained for the people of God, as the reward of a godly life. The obligation to receive circumcision, was annulled on the establishment of the christian church, and the ordinance of baptism instituted in its stead. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that these rites—circumcision and baptism—though obligatory under different dispensations, are the same in nature and design. This view is adopted by the church. We are taught in her Catechism, that by baptism, we are made “members of Christ,” that is of his church, “children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven.” “In baptism there are two parts—the outward and visible sign—water wherein the person is baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and the inward and spiritual grace—a death unto sin.

and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and children of wrath, we are hereby made children of grace." "Baptism," in the language of the XXVII. article, "is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby christian men are discerned from others that be not christened: but it is also a sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church: the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed: faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." This view of baptism we are persuaded is sustained by the word of God. "For ye are all," says St. Paul, "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, and if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise," Gal. 111. 26. 27. 29. "By one spirit are we all baptized into one body, 1. Cor. xii. 13. According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit.

111. 5. If the above remarks are founded on the sacred scriptures, and agreeable to the views entertained by the primitive church in regard to this sacrament, then those who are baptized are engrafted into the church of Christ—they have entered into covenant with Almighty God, and are justly entitled to the manifold blessings resulting therefrom; unless those privileges which have thus been placed within their reach, are forfeited by hardness of heart, or contempt of God's holy word. From the text, then, which conveys authority to us to administer, and you to receive holy baptism—from the examples of holy men in the church during the Apostle's ministry, as well as the express command, repent and be baptized;—and from the nature of that ordinance, by which alone we become members of Christ's mystical body—it is evident, that it may not be omitted, without leading to fatal consequences. It is true, it does not save as a meritorious cause, but it is equally certain that to live in an unbaptized state, is to despise the authority of Christ, undervalue the examples of holy men, and above all, reject those covenant privileges of becoming members of Christ, chil-

dren of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven, which by the gospel, have been set before us. Not that you are to be baptized without due preparation. The adult must first believe. Faith, repentance, that needeth not to be repented of, conversion to God, and a fixed determination, relying on the aid of the divine spirit, to lead a new life,—are indispensably requisite for the reception of this rite of initiation into the church. Christians are to be “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, zealous of good works;” and if these eminent qualifications are not in a measure possessed previous to, they will not be conferred by baptism. Delay not, as you value the soul, and respect the authority of that Redeemer by whose blood you have been ransomed, as a peculiar people, and before whom you must all stand, to render a strict account of the “deeds done in the body,”—to make your peace with God. Entreat the Lord to make you his servant, and “pray without ceasing,” that he may become your God.

LECTURE II.

Infant baptism established—the promises of God extended to children under the patriarchal dispensation—under the Jewish—circumcision instituted—its design—obligations assumed thereby—one church existing under several dispensations—baptism instituted in the place of circumcision.

That baptism, which is a sacrament “generally necessary to salvation,” and a rite of initiation into all the privileges of the christian covenant, ought to be administered to the believing adult, is a proposition commonly admitted in theory, though not always carried out in practice. It was the design of my previous observations to present this duty in a clear and scriptural light. Thus far, there is scarcely any diversity of opinion. For the last two centuries, however, there has been considerable controversy—carried on with sharpness of wit, often with little discretion, and less charity,—as to the proper subjects of christian baptism. By some it is maintained, that believers alone

ought to be admitted to this holy ordinance, and that it is no less than profane mockery to “sprinkle clean water” on the infant’s brow in the name of the blessed Trinity; while others conceive, that the promise of forgiveness of sin, through repentance and baptism, is made to them, and their children. The latter of these opinions is adopted by the church, of which it is our exalted privilege to be members. Give me, therefore, your attention, while I shall endeavour to present, with meekness and fear, our reasons for entertaining that opinion.

I. We are greatly confirmed in the belief, “that the baptism of young children, is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ,” (Art. XXVII) from the fact, that under the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, they were included in God’s promises, as partakers of his covenanted mercies. The covenant made with Adam—including a brief, and single promise of good things to come, indefinite and yet sufficiently clear to be a ground of hope, was extended to all his posterity. The correctness of this observation is evident both from the sad consequen-

ces of violating that covenant—death to Adam and the whole race of man—and the language employed in renewing it to Noah subsequent to the flood;—“Behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your *seed* after you,” Gen. ix. 9. This covenant, being universal, as soon as a child was born into the world, the responsibilities thereof rested upon it; under the immediate control and blessing of Almighty God, it was his child, and he was its God. Hence there is no account of any ordinance, by which that relation was formed. It was, therefore, a peculiarity of the patriarchal dispensation, that all were admitted, by birth, into the hopes and privileges conveyed to the common parent of all, by the promise, “the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” Thus from Adam, until the call of Abram to be the Father of the faithful,—embracing a period of more than two thousand years, in which the flood, and some of the most important events recorded in sacred history, transpired, the right of children to be partakers of all the blessings, which God conferred on his people, was never questioned. By reason, however, of the wickedness of man,

which was very great, this inestimable privilege was restricted to Abram and his posterity; to whom appertained the adoption, and the covenants, and the giving of the law. Here at the commencement of the Jewish dispensation, which continued two thousand years, until the coming of Christ, who was the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believed," one might have supposed, that children would have been excluded from the Abrahamic covenant; if they, by reason of their tender age, had been unfit objects of being admitted thereunto. God then made a selection of a peculiar people, electing them to temporal and spiritual blessings; and yet we find the promise had respect to them and their children,—“Behold my covenant is with thee, and I will establish my covenant between me, and thee, and thy *seed* after thee,” Gen. xvii, 4. 7. Nor can the interpretation be sustained, which has been given by some to this passage; that it was designed merely to benefit the seed of Abraham, which was capable of believing. A solemn rite was instituted at the same time, by which that seed was admitted into the visible church. Every

male child, born of Jewish parents, or bought with money, on the eighth day after birth, was circumcised, which was to be a token of the covenant between God and them, Gen. xvii. 9. 14. Besides, what was the object of this painful ceremony, which, as a burden grievous to be borne,—was imposed on all the congregation of Israel? It was not only a pledge of prosperity and perpetuity to the Jewish nation; that they should possess the land of Canaan, which flowed with milk and honey; that they should be more in number than the stars of Heaven and the sand of the sea; and that they should be preserved, as a peculiar people, connected with, and yet separated from all nations,—sustaining their national character, amid all the vicissitudes which awaited them: these, we repeat, were not the only objects for which circumcision was instituted; it was rather to ratify and seal that covenant in which all the “families of the earth were to be blessed.” For this reason, it has been called by St. Paul, a “seal of the righteousness of faith.” We may be greatly assisted in forming a scriptural idea of the nature of circumcision by a knowledge of the

obligations assumed thereby. Whatever opinion might be entertained respecting Jewish rites, by aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, every one who was circumcised was a debtor to do the whole law; and for the least violation of it the severest punishment; in some cases, death was inflicted. "Circumcision profited, if a person kept the law; but if he was a breaker of the law his circumcision was made uncircumcision." These observations are worthy of serious consideration. The different nations which inhabited the land of Canaan were not bound by the law, except so far as every divine law is of its own nature obligatory. They had another law, written by the finger of God on their hearts, to which they were debtors; but the moment the seal of God's covenant was placed on the proselyte to the Jewish faith, or the infant, a new relation was formed,—the light of nature was made of none effect by the law of grace, and while extraordinary privileges were thus conferred, new responsibilities were assumed. They were no more "strangers and foreigners; but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the

household of God." They were not excluded from the hopes and consolations of religion; but were permitted to engage in all the services of the Jewish ritual. They were enrolled with that blessed company of faithful people, to whom appertained the law, and the promises; not only relating to things temporal, but spiritual and eternal. For, as circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham, and his posterity; those that received circumcision, were required to continue in all things written in the book of the law, to do them. It was of no avail to the salvation of the soul, that the descendants of Abraham pleaded, we have Abraham to our Father, that they boasted of the law, and approved of things excellent, except so far as they walked in the steps of that faith, which Abraham had. It was of no consequence to those who had been circumcised in infancy, through the instrumentality of their parents, to rise up as soon as they came to years of discretion, and declare that they were under no obligation to keep the law, because a grievous burden had been imposed on them, without their consent. The parent acted by the authority

of God, and those who were made debtors to the law had no reason to complain, since their own happiness was the end to be secured.— Whether therefore, we refer to the nature of circumcision, or the responsibilities assumed thereby, the conclusion is inevitable, that by that rite membership into the visible church was sealed and ratified; and yet we find that children of the tenderest age received this ordinance, and were admitted into covenant privileges. This fact cannot be called in question,—it must be admitted by all.

And it is worthy of remark, that the Jews, recognising the responsible relation in which their children had been placed, embraced the earliest opportunity of training them up, as God's children, in the way they should go, that when they became old, they might not depart from it. If then, children were admitted into the Church under the Jewish dispensation, the blessings of which were restricted to a *particular nation*, can any reason be assigned why they should not be admitted into the church, under the christian dispensation, which is designed for *all*? To avoid the conclusion, which

we would draw from the membership of infants in the Jewish church; I am aware it has been said, "that there has been one church under the patriarchal, another under the Jewish, and that now we have the church, under the christian dispensation; and that these churches are essentially different from each other." But this we apprehend is not the case. We contend that the church has always been the same in her essential features; though existing under divers dispensations, with ordinances peculiar to each. The law contained in ordinances has indeed been abrogated; types and shadows have been succeeded by realities; but as to the church, her glory has ever been in the same *head*; in a ministry divinely constituted; in covenants confirmed by a seal; and in ordinances blessed by the spirit to the comfort of the weary and heavy laden. The church is built on "the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord," Eph. 11. 20. 21. The doctrine contained in this passage is, that the prophets were co-

workers with the Apostles in establishing the church—not one church under the old and another under the new dispensation; but that one fold of which Christ is the Shepherd. That the church which existed among the Jews was to be perpetuated, is evident also from the declaration of our Lord to the Jews—“that the kingdom of God” should be taken from them “and given to a nation bringing forth fruits thereof,” Matt. xxi. 43. Without doubt, the “kingdom of God” here means the church. This is generally the signification of that expression, and in the passage under consideration, the contest and design of the chapter, will not admit of any other interpretation. The church, then, was to be taken from the Jews, which pre-supposes its existence among them, and it was to be given to the Gentiles—“it was a mere transfer, taking from one and giving to another the very same thing. What the Jews lost, the Gentiles gained; but in the thing transferred there was no change. Nothing was added thereto, neither was any thing taken therefrom.”* But perhaps it may be thought, that this doctrine is too important

*See, Jerram on infant baptism.

to be admitted on the authority of two or three isolated passages, which possibly might be consistently explained otherwise. Without, therefore, admitting the correctness of this observation, for we believe a single passage of the divine word is a sufficient ground to challenge faith—we are willing nevertheless to test the theory, above advocated, by the XI. Chapt. of Romans. Read that Chapter carefully, and you will find, that the church of God is represented under the emblem of an olive tree; the natural branches of which, that is the Jews, were broken off because of unbelief, while the Gentiles, an olive tree, wild by nature, were grafted into the good olive tree,—the same tree, observe, from which the natural branches had been broken, partaking of its root and fatness—that is enjoying all the privileges, which the Jewish church had.—The parent stock remained, it was neither cut down, nor removed, that another might be planted in its stead; its branches alone were affected. The natural branches were cut off—the Jews were rejected—and the Gentiles as new branches were ingrafted into the parent stock; and in addition to them a conditional promise was made,

that the Jews should again be incorporated into the church, and be grafted into their own olive tree. The church during these successive changes at first consisted of Jews, then of Jews and Gentiles, and finally it was composed almost entirely of Gentiles, with the promise that "Israel should again be saved with an everlasting salvation;"—but it never ceased to exist for a single moment, the old tree yet remained, some of the branches were broken off, and others grafted in,—old and new members, admitted by circumcision into the Jewish, and baptism into the christian church, were blended together in one body, and thus the church was perpetuated under these several dispensations, which had always consisted of infant and adult members. This is a fact, concerning which, there can be no controversy; neither is the supposition unreasonable. A Government may exist under the same constitution, composed of the same members, with the same laws, vested in the hands of men, for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well,—the same in all its essential features, even though there be diversities of administrations. In like man-

ner we believe, and have, we conceive, proved, that the church has been the same in her essential features, though existing under divers dispensations. Here then are three remarkable facts,—children by express command of God were admitted into the Jewish church; circumcision was instituted as a rite of initiation; and the church is the same now, as it was then, with this difference, that it is under a more glorious and spiritual dispensation; and if children were once admitted into the church, under such circumstances—never having been deprived of that privilege, are we not warranted in concluding, that it is agreeable to the will of God, that they should be made members of the household of faith. But the question arises, how can this be accomplished? Circumcision, which was instituted as a door of admission into the church has been abrogated. We are not under the law; but under grace. We are delivered from the yoke of bondage imposed on our Fathers, and brought into that glorious liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free. Is there, then, under this more favourable dispensation, a rite of initiation, corresponding with, and taking the

place of circumcision; or have we the strange anomaly of a church, without an external ordinance whereby visible membership may be obtained? This leads to another point of no little consequence, which is to show that baptism was instituted in the place of circumcision, and is of the same nature and design. The feasts and ordinances of the Jewish ritual, as well as the institution of the Sabbath, and the different courts of the temple—especially the most holy place,—were typical of good things to come.—The passover, for instance, while it was kept, with great solemnity, in commemoration of an important event connected with Jewish history, was also typical of the Lord's Supper. This is proved by the following passage: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us—therefore let us keep the feast." 1. Cor. v. 7. 8. Equally certain is it, that baptism is the anti-type of circumcision, and supplies its place. This point is established by the declaration of St. Paul, who in speaking of the privileges which the Colossians enjoyed in Christ, says: "In whom ye also are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of

the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ." Col. ii. 11. 12. The design of the Apostle is to show that circumcision is needless, for that end he reminds "the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse" that they are complete in Christ, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," being "buried with him in baptism,"* from which it is certain that baptism, the "spiritual circumcision" as it was called by the primitive christians, is alluded to by the expressions; "circumcision made without hands"—and "circumcision of Christ."

*"Buried with him in baptism" and other *figurative* expressions of a like nature are thought by some to be unanswerable arguments in favour of immersion. But if a doctrine is to be sustained in this way, by a doubtful interpretation of figurative language, scripture is decidedly in favour of sprinkling—"so shall he *sprinkle* many nations." Isaiah, lii. 15. "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. "Having our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience," Heb. x. 22.

LECTURE III.

Infant baptism—analogy between baptism and circumcision—these ordinances differ in some respects—prophecies relating to the extension of the church—its blessings designed for all—the Apostles understand the command to baptize in its most comprehensive sense—the command explained—facts in the New Testament favour infant baptism—command for it—households baptized—the holy seed—serious difficulties attending the opposite theory.

Baptism, then, was instituted in the place of circumcision; accordingly, we find a striking analogy between these ordinances in these respects—they were appointed by divine authority as rites of initiation into the privileges of church membership; as seals of the righteousness of faith; as emblems of spiritual regeneration; and as means of grace to the worthy recipient. Otherwise, however, they partake of the nature of the different dispensations for which they were instituted. The Jewish church

was peculiar in two respects—its privileges were restricted to the descendants of Abraham, and its ceremonies were typical of good things to come. Hence circumcision was confined to that seed, to whom appertained the promises, with the exception of some few proselytes to the Jewish faith;—it was restricted as to the time of its administration to the eighth day after birth;—and was confined to the male sex. The Jews regarded themselves as the chosen people of God, and as the special objects of his covenanted mercies; viewing the rest of mankind, as enemies to God, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; but it cannot be concealed, that many a faithful Jew, anticipated with delight, those latter days of the churches glory, when “the mountain of the Lords house should be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and all nations should flow unto it.” It had been declared to Abraham:—“in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” According to the second psalm, the *Heathen* were to be given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Isaiah was no stranger

to that truth;—"in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the *Gentiles* seek, and his rest shall be glorious." The eye of faith rested on these promises, and after every earthly comfort was gone, and the Jewish nation was oppressed, and carried away captive into a strange land, one source of consolation yet remained.—Afflicted and distressed, they were not forsaken. The promises of God remained sure. They clung to them as their only hope, as pledges of God's love to be manifested in his own good time; and as earnest of brighter days, and more pleasing prospects. The Messiah, then, "whose kingdom was to be an everlasting kingdom, and whose dominion was to endure throughout all generations" was the *Gentiles* trust, as well as Israel's hope. At length the fulness of time came—"the word was made flesh" and good old Simeon well understood, that Christ was to break down "the middle wall of partition," which had separated Jew and *Gentile*, and to "reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." After circumcising the child Jesus as the law directed; "he blessed God and said, Lord

now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of *all* people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." While, therefore, the blessings of the Jewish church were restricted to a particular people, the privileges of visible church membership under the christian dispensation are extended to all. Nor are we to suppose that baptism restricts the blessings of the gospel to a few; that ordinance partakes of the nature of the dispensation for which it was instituted. The command to baptize is of as universal application as the blessings of that covenant which is sealed thereby. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There is only one thing, which disqualifies the adult, but not the infant for the reception of this ordinance, that is unbelief—and this also operates as an inseparable barrier against receiving the least benefit from the gospel, which is designed for all. Rightly to examine the subject of infant baptism by the New Testament, it is important

to recall the precise condition of those to whom the command to baptize was given. The design of many of the remarks made, heretofore, has been to enable you to do this understandingly; while at the same time they afford no ordinary argument in favour of admitting children to holy baptism. They were Jews by birth, their children from time immemorial, by divine authority, had been made partakers with them of the privileges of church membership—a solemn rite had been instituted by which that relation was formed, which was believed to be typical of some other ordinance; they regarded the church, the same in her essential features in all ages; with this difference, that Christ came to break down the middle wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles, and place the means of grace, and hopes of glory, within the reach of all;—when therefore, baptism, was instituted, in the place of circumcision, by a command which was indefinite, as to the proper subjects of that ordinance, are we not warranted in concluding, that it was the intention of our blessed Lord that it should be administered to children, as well as adults, and that it was so understood by

his disciples. There is nothing in the nature of baptism, nor in the christian dispensation, which makes this conclusion improbable. If it was declared in a single passage, or even intimated that children ought not to be baptized, or if it could be shown, by unanswerable argument, that those privileges which they enjoyed under the old dispensation of becoming members of the church, have been annulled by the gospel, then we would willingly abandon our present belief, and practice. In vain will we search the New Testament for information on either of these points. The command, which conveyed authority to the Apostles to baptize, contains not the least intimation, whether it is to be administered to infants, adults, or to both. How then are we to suppose the Apostles understood the direction, under which they went forth to evangelize all nations? Instructed in the belief and principles which had been adopted by their forefathers, they would naturally refer to the original promise made to Abraham. There they would find an express command, for admitting children into the church, which was given before circumcision was instituted—it remained

in force until Christ came—circumcision was then abrogated, and baptism instituted; but the original command was not annulled—it is as binding on us, as it was on those to whom it was originally given. It was under the impression, then, that the command given to Abraham was still in force, that the Apostles went forth to evangelize all nations. There can, therefore, be no question as to the propriety of admitting children to the privileges of visible church membership—an express command leaves no doubt on that point—and as baptism is the only rite by which that relation can be formed, the conclusion we think is inevitable, that they ought to be baptized. In fact the text requires this:—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them." All nations, wherever they, or their successors in the ministerial office, should go, were to be disciplined—old and young were to be the objects of their solicitude and care;—and as we have in the case of Timothy, an example of a child being sufficiently instructed in the divine word to make him wise unto salvation, the earliest opportunity was to be embraced to train up the young in the way

they should go. This is the first duty designated by the text, the second is to “baptize them;” that is “all nations”—old and young of which every nation is composed. Children, then, by reason of this commandment are to be baptized, and made members of Christs’ church militant.

This truth is conformed beyond a reasonable doubt, by many facts recorded in the New Testament; facts which are wholly inexplicable, if we deny infant baptism. It is not pretended, that our blessed Lord has expressly declared that children ought not to be baptized, let us then refer to his actions, and see whether we can discover any thing, which will warrant us to adopt that conclusion. He frequently referred to children, as the objects of his solicitude and care. To instruct his disciples in a very important christian duty, he took a *little child*, and set him in the midst of them, and said, “except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” The praise of children, who cried in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” though displeasing to the scribes and pharisees, was acceptable to him. And when

"*young children* were brought to him that he should touch them "he was much displeased because his disciples rebuked those that brought them, and said, "suffer the *little children* to come unto me, and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of God."—Mark, x. 13. 14. If the church, which is the meaning of the expression "kingdom of God" in the passage under consideration—is composed of little children; and if they, answerable for nothing but original sin, are meet to be admitted therein, they ought to be baptized, for it is impossible otherwise to be made visible members of his kingdom. The fact of infant church membership is clearly stated here, and by referring to the declaration of St. Peter, we may learn how that relation was formed; "repent, and be *baptized* every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you, and to your *children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,"—Acts 11. 38. 39. Here, if any where, at the first preaching of the gospel, after the complete establishment of the christian church, we might

expect, if the views adopted by some are correct, to find children deprived of those blessings which they previously enjoyed; but what is the fact—the “promise” which had been made to Abraham is declared to be to “them and their children” and to all that are “afar off”—even the Gentiles were now to be made partakers of it;—that is the promise of remission of sins, which is to be obtained, through Christ, by repentance and baptism. This is the only reasonable interpretation, of which this passage is susceptible; and it is corroborated by the history of the Church, as recorded in the Acts, and Epistles. We there read of whole families being baptized, and though it is not certain that they contained children, yet there is strong probability in favor of that supposition. St. Paul, baptized three house-holds, that of Stephanas, of Lydia, and of the Jailer at Philippi. That Christian parents should be desirous of training up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, which supposes the existence of a covenant relation between Him and them, is nothing more than might reasonably be expected, when it is re-

membered, that many of the first converts to Christianity were Jews, whose religion made it the bounden duty of every parent to instruct their children in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. Transferred into the glorious liberty, wherewith Christ made them free, they would still regard the "promises" as made to them and their children. And as it was common, when the Church was first established, for Jews, Gentiles, and Christians to intermarry, it was considered the duty of the believing parent to instruct the children in divine things. This subject is alluded to in 1 Cor. vii. 13. 14. One of the questions agitated in the Church, was, whether unbelief was a sufficient ground for breaking the marriage contract. The Apostle declares it was not. "For," says he, "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife, is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." The Apostle surely does not intend to intimate, that belief in the husband or wife is necessary to make the children lawful, for then it would follow, that the children of unbelieving parents are al-

ways illegitimate—a conclusion to which few would be willing to subscribe, neither does he intend to convey the idea, that the pious parent is always instrumental in bringing the unbelieving partner to a knowledge of the truth; nor that every child born of parents, of whom one is a devout Christian, is through his or her instrumentality made a partaker of the Holy Ghost; for this is contradicted by fact and experience. How then does a believing parent sanctify an unbelieving one, so that their children are holy? The term “holy” is frequently used in scripture, in a ceremonial sense, for a thing set apart, or devoted to God, while “unclean” is expressive of the contrary; thus the Jews by reason of the covenant relation which they sustained to God, were called “a holy people,” and their children “a holy seed;” but the Gentiles were called “unclean,” and “unholy,” because they were strangers from the covenants of promise. The advantage then—to apply these observations to the passage under consideration—of a believing, and an unbelieving parent remaining together, consisted mainly in this;—their children were devoted to

the Lord by baptism; and trained up in the principles of the Christian religion. The influence which they, and the believing parent jointly exerted, generally prevailed on the unbelieving party to embrace the religion of Christ; so that while the parent was "sanctified," the children were made "holy." These, and other passages of a like nature, can be explained only on the supposition that children were admitted to Holy baptism, when the New Testament was written. To deny this, and adopt the opposite theory, will lead to innumerable difficulties, which never have been satisfactorily explained. It is well known that every objection which the ingenuity of men could invent, was brought against our blessed Lord—at one time he was rejected as a "wine bibber," at another as a "friend of publicans and sinners"—and it is not to be supposed that the Jews would tamely submit to a rejection of their children. Had not baptism been administered to them, a plausible objection against receiving Christ would have been given. The Jews might have said, "You profess to come to seek, and to save those that are lost, to ful-

fil the Law, and the Prophets, and yet our children are to be excluded from the hopes of religion,—*we* are to be admitted into covenant, *they* are to have nothing for their portion but the uncovenanted mercies of God—surely this is a yoke more greivous to be borne than that which our fathers imposed on us.” If, therefore, infants had been excluded from baptism, that fact, we think, would have been brought as a reason for not receiving Christ. The Jews, moreover, contended earnestly for their rites. Their prejudices were inveterate. Every thing connected with their religion, was regarded as sacred. Circumcision was practised for a considerable time after the Christian Church was established by professing Christians. This fact furnishes another direct proof of infant baptism. By circumcision their right to Church-membership was recognised; to confirm that right, baptism must have been administered to them; this must be admitted, or we must adopt the strange conclusion, that the Apostles would sanction this right, and at the same time refuse to confirm it. And it is remarkable, during the controversy which was occasioned in the Church

respecting circumcision, that there is not the remotest intimation of the Apostles striving to deprive children of their rights, and privileges. From all of which circumstances, we conclude, that infant baptism was a thing well known during the Apostles ministry, and of universal practice in the Church.

LECTURE IV.

Proof that Infant baptism was practised by the Primitive Christians—testimony of Justin Martyr—of Irenæus—of Origen—of Tertullian;—Council of Carthage—controversy between Pelagius and Augustine—remarks on this testimony—objections answered.

Having shown that the “baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ,” an additional confirmation of our faith, on this subject, may be received by a brief reference to the history of the Christian Church from the Apostolic age.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the Apostles, declares, “that he was acquainted with many persons, sixty or seventy years old, of both sexes, that were discipled to Christ in infancy,” and if so, they must have been baptized in the days of the Apostles.

Irenæus, who flourished about thirty-five years after Justin Martyr, and between sixty and

seventy years after the Apostles, expresses himself to this effect:—"He (Jesus Christ) came to save all persons by himself; all, I say, who are regenerated by him unto God, infants, and little ones, and children, and young men, and old men."

Origen, who flourished in the same age, and not more than one hundred years after the Apostles, says, "Infants are baptized for the remission of sins; and if it be asked what sins, our answer is, no one is free from pollution, though his life should be but of the length of one day upon earth."

Tertullian, about two hundred and twenty years after the birth of Christ, is the first writer of whom we read in Ecclesiastical history, as being opposed to infant baptism. That father entertained many strange notions on various subjects of divinity, particularly on baptism. He thought that baptism was accompanied with the remission of all past sins, and that sins committed thereafter were unpardonable, on which account, he advises, contrary to universal custom, that the baptizing of *infants*, and *adults*, be deferred until a late period of life. But those

who reject infant baptism, as an unscriptural ordinance, gain nothing by appealing to the testimony of Tertullian; for notwithstanding the erroneous opinions which he adopted, the fact of his recommending that *infants* be not baptized, if they are likely to survive the period of infancy, and the reason assigned therefor, show that it was customary for them to receive baptism in his day.

There was indeed some dispute in the primitive Church, as to the time when baptism ought to be administered. Some contended, that like circumcision, it ought to be performed on the eighth day after birth; whereas others were of the opinion, that the time was not material, but must depend on circumstances. To settle that question, the Council of Carthage, composed of sixty bishops, in which Cyprian presided, was held in the year of our Lord 253. Fidus, an African bishop, inquired of that Council, “whether the baptism of an infant must not always be on the eighth day after birth, because circumcision was so?” They gave this as their united opinion, by letter,—“We ought not to hinder any person from baptism, and the grace of God,

who is merciful to us all. And this rule, as it holds for all, ought especially to be observed in reference to infants, even to those newly born." This Council was not held to determine the propriety of infant baptism—that was taken for granted; but simply whether it ought to be performed on the eighth day after birth; and this shows the custom of the Church at that period.

Another striking proof, that infant baptism was practised in the primitive Church, may be found by a reference to the controversy, which took place between Augustine and Pelagius, about three hundred years after the Apostles. Pelagius denied the doctrine of original sin, and during the unhappy controversy which was excited on that subject, Augustine his opponent, a faithful champion for the truth, inquired, "why are infants to be baptized for the remission of sins, if they have no sin?"—intimating at the same time, that a denial of original sin must lead to a denial of infant baptism—"which would be resisting the authority of the whole Church, nay the authority of Christ, and his Apostles." The reply of Pelagius is remarkable: "Baptism," says he, "ought to be admin-

istered to infants with the same form as is used in the case of adult persons.”—“Men, slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants.”—“I never heard of any, no, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants; for who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and so make them miss the kingdom of God!” Here we behold two men, undoubtedly among the most learned, with abundant opportunities of knowing the opinions of men, and the universal practice of the Church from Apostolic times, contending for a fundamental article of the Christian faith. Augustine refers to the baptism of infants, as affording an entire refutation of the opinion that they are without sin; while Pelagius is free to acknowledge, “that he never heard of any, no, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants.” From these facts, we are forced to the conclusion, that the practice of the Church in that age, is in favor of infant baptism.* We

* The fathers to whom we have alluded, might entertain many opinions to which we would not be willing to subscribe, without in the least destroying their

might pursue this subject, so abundant is the testimony of antiquity on the point under consideration; but enough has been said to convince the sincere inquirer after truth. It is worthy of remark, that the writers to whom we have called your attention, mostly testify as to the *fact* of infant baptism; nor do they speak of it with surprise, as a custom newly introduced, fraught with evil consequences, but as one of long standing, even as of Christ's institution. On the supposition, that children were not made members of the Church during the ministry of our Lord, and his Apostles; but that, that doctrine was introduced into the Church at a subsequent period, we cannot imagine that this would have been the case. Those who lived in the ages of the Church, to which we have alluded, were men of eminent holiness, that counted not even their own lives as dear unto themselves, and who, moreover, "continued in the Apostles fellowship, and doctrine;" they would not, therefore bring, neither would they

testimony as to the *fact*, that infant baptism was practised in the first, second, third and fourth centuries.

suffer new and strange doctrines to be brought into the Church, without lifting a warning voice. It is impossible to refer to a single father of the primitive Church, who has written against infant baptism; it is not rejected as a cunningly devised fable; neither has the Church ever decreed that it ought not to be administered. On the contrary, it is always represented as a Godly ordinance, instituted by Christ, and universally acknowledged by the Church. Nor only so, those who maintain that it is of human origin, in all charity we think, are bound to trace its history—to show with whom it originated—to point out the time, and to name the Church which first received it—and then to show the means employed to induce the universal Church to practise it. But this cannot be done. For there is abundant evidence to show, that from the days of the Apostles until the reformation, in the sixteenth century, it was the universal custom of the Church to baptize infants; and if we except Tertullian, and a small sect among the Waldenses* in the twelfth century, it is im-

* They denied salvation to infants, and therefore, refused, on that account, to baptize them.

possible to find a writer of any note, calling in question the propriety of this practice, until the Anabaptists arose in Germany about the year 1520. They were the first *organized sect*, which denied the validity of infant baptism, and from that time until the present, there has been considerable controversy on that subject. Whether, therefore, we refer to the precepts of our Lord and his Apostles, or to the universal practice of the Church, for more than fifteen hundred years after Christ, we are greatly confirmed in the belief, that "the baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the Church."

It is true, various objections have been brought of late years against this doctrine, which have been urged with zeal and confidence worthy of a better cause, and which ought therefore to be candidly met, and answered in meekness, and love. "It is said that children are not capable of believing, and since it is said,—He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, they ought not therefore to be baptized."

In reply to this objection we observe, 1st, That it is based on an improper and unreason-

able interpretation of the sacred scriptures, and is not therefore of the least consequence. Those passages which require repentance, and faith, previous to the reception of baptism, are addressed to adults only—those that are capable of complying with these requisitions—it is therefore a perversion of the word of God to apply them to infants, who can neither repent, nor believe. The correctness of this principle of interpretation must be acknowledged, or we shall meet with innumerable difficulties; for instance, faith in Christ we are taught to believe is indispensably necessary to salvation, and yet it would be unjust, nay it would contradict several passages in the Epistle to the Romans, to require this of the benighted Heathen, who never heard that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;—the law written on their hearts by the finger of God is their guide.

2. Besides, when we find declarations like these—“Repent and be baptized—He that believeth and is baptized—They that gladly received the word were baptized,” this is nothing more than might be expected. The Gospel, of necessity, had first to be addressed to adults—

they were commanded to repent, and yet they were assured, that the promise was to "them and their children." After Lydia believed, she was baptized, and her household. As soon as the Jailor believed, he was baptized, he and all his straightway. The same course is adopted by the Church at the present day. Our Missionaries in heathen lands, placed like the Apostles in the midst of unbelievers, require repentance, and faith of the parent, before baptism is administered to him, or his household,

3. Nor is this all. Carefully analyze the passage, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and the impropriety of applying it to infants, may quickly be discovered. To maintain, that it refers to them, would lead of necessity to the fearful conclusion, that all dying in infancy must be lost: for if believing must precede baptism, and baptism salvation, then as they cannot believe, nor be proper subjects of baptism, we should think, they ought not to be "saved." In fact, to explain this passage as some have, would necessarily exclude infants from Heaven as well as from baptism. We believe, however, that they shall be admitted

into the kingdom of God, through Christ, without belief, which shows that the passage under notice, must refer to adults alone.

4. Besides, if we admit that children “die in the Lord,” and shall be “raised to life eternal,” what reason can we have for adopting the belief, that want of faith disqualifies them for holy baptism. Surely it does not require greater preparation to be admitted into the Church here, than it does into Heaven hereafter. Upon the whole then, when the objection, “that children ought not to be baptized, because they cannot believe” is duly examined, it will be found to be without the least foundation.

But it is said, “there is no express commandment requiring children to be baptized.” Admitting this, the question is important, ‘Is this to be demanded?’* The privilege of being admitted into the Church, was given to them by God himself, and it is for those who assert that that privilege has been taken away from them, to

*There is no command requiring women to receive the Holy Sacrament, neither is there an instance on record, that they ever did, and yet reasoning by analogy—all denominations admit them to the Lord’s table.

prove it.—But the above objection is contradicted by facts. There are two passages at least, in which infants are commanded to be baptized. “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them.” “Repent and be baptized, for the promise is to you and your *children*.” It is not necessary, however, to dwell on this objection, as it has been satisfactorily answered by many of the remarks previously made.

When then we find as has been shown, that children of the tenderest age, by divine authority, were admitted into the Jewish Church; that circumcision was instituted as a seal, whereby that covenant relation was confirmed; that baptism was instituted in the place of circumcision,—the Church being the same in her essential features under all dispensations; that the commandments of our Lord, and his Apostles, require baptism to be administered, both to infants and adults; that there are many passages in the New Testament, which can be explained only on the supposition, that children were made members of the Church, and so regarded as an holy seed; and that there is abundant evidence that it was the univereal custom of the Church

to baptize infants, from the days of the Apostles until the sixteenth century, we are greatly confirmed in the belief, that "the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." Art. xxvii.

LECTURE V.

Mode of baptism immaterial, shown by the nature of that ordinance, and by analogy—command indefinite—mode never designated—the word baptize examined—baptism on the day of Pentecost—Eunuch baptized by Philip—the jailor baptized—conclusion adopted from the preceding remarks—objections answered—concluding remarks.

Few subjects in divinity, among Protestants, have given rise to more controversy for the last two centuries, than the *mode* of baptism.* By some it is maintained, that immersion is the only mode enjoined by Christ, and recognized in the sacred scriptures; so that baptism performed otherwise is not valid, and the recipient is not

* If the mode of baptism was not a subject of controversy in the Church before the sixteenth century, and if sprinkling was practised previous to that time—(and there is abundant evidence to show that it was,) this circumstance bears strongly on the principles of those who strenuously insist that immersion is necessary to the validity of baptism.

made a member of Christ; while others are of the opinion that sprinkling is the most edifying and scriptural mode. Avoiding these extremes, the church, with that charity which usually marks her course, has taught us to believe, in her articles and formularies, that the mode of baptism is not material. She recognizes sprinkling and immersion, as equally valid; accordingly she directs her ministers to “dip the person in water” at baptism, or to “pour water upon him,” in the name of the blessed Trinity. It may then be a profitable inquiry to examine whether a particular mode of baptism has been enjoined, and whether it is essential to the validity of that ordinance. In baptism there are two parts—the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace. The outward sign is water, the inward grace is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and children of wrath, we are hereby made children of grace. It is therefore a sign of regeneration, a rite of initiation into all the privileges of the christian covenant, and to the worthy recipient, a means of grace. There is nothing, then, in the nature

of baptism, which necessarily leads to the belief that it must be by immersion. All that is essential, we apprehend, is the application of water, by an authorized ministry, in the name of the blessed Trinity. An apt illustration of this idea is presented by the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper. During the Apostles ministry, it was customary to receive a large quantity of bread, and to drink freely of the cup, in the celebration of this mystery. The Corinthians made but little difference between it and a common meal, on which account they were severely reprimanded by St. Paul. Now we think, a morsel of bread, and a little wine, is sufficient to enable the devout christian to receive Christ's most blessed body and blood. Whether, therefore, we refer to the design of baptism, or examine this matter analogically by the Lord's supper, we are led to the conclusion, that the mode is immaterial. "Clean water" sprinkled on the brow, we believe, is as effectual as an entire immersion of the whole body. We admit, if our blessed Lord had designated a particular mode, or if the Apostles had uniformly baptized in a certain manner,

(and surely we might have expected this, if the mode is so essential as some maintain) that there would be an end of all controversy. But this is not the case. The command given at the institution of baptism is to this effect: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them." The mode is not designated. It is neither declared to be by sprinkling, nor by immersion. Baptism is a subject of frequent reference in the New Testament: "Repent and be baptized; He that believeth and is baptized; They that gladly received the word were baptized; Be baptized for the remission of sins"—and yet it is remarkable that the mode is never designated. How then are we to suppose the Apostles understood the commission, under which they went forth to teach, and baptize, all nations? They were Jews by birth, and as "divers washings," (baptisms in the original) had been practised by that nation from time immemorial, both by sprinkling, affusion, and immersion, it is reasonable to believe they would understand the word baptize in its most extensive signification. Nor does the Greek word, *Baptizo*, which we translate baptize, invariably mean, as has been

supposed, to *immerse*; and that you may be satisfied on that point, we ask your attention to the following passages. In the book of Joel we find this remarkable prophecy: "And it shall come to pass that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (ii. 28), which is generally believed to have been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the divine spirit descended upon the Apostles—"assembled together with one accord, in one place" and sat upon them as cloven tongues, like as of fire; (Acts ii. 3) and yet in our Lord's prediction of this event—"this pouring out of the spirit"—the word baptize is employed. "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts i. 5.* Speaking of the Pharisees, St. Mark (vii. 4.) says—"When they come from the market, except they *wash*," (baptize in the original) "they eat not," i. e. wash their hands, for the ground of the complaint brought against our Lord's disciples, was, that they ate "with unwashen hands." "And

* "Baptized *with* water," does not imply an entire immersion, but rather the application of water by pouring or sprinkling.

many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing" (baptizing in the Greek) "of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." Now there is abundant proof that these ablutions were performed by sprinkling. Of this you may be assured by a reference to the following passage in the book of Numbers, (xix. 18.) "A clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon all the persons that were there." This shows that the word baptize is used by St. Mark in reference to sprinkling. This conclusion is confirmed beyond a reasonable doubt by the parallel passage in St. Luke's gospel, (xi. 38), where a partial application of water, the mere washing of hands, is called in the original, a baptism. "They marvelled that he had not first *baptized* before dinner."

It is generally believed that baptism was practised by the Jews long before the incarnation of Christ. The declaration of St. Paul in 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. seems to accord with that belief: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were un-

der the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Baptized! how? not by immersion; for we are informed from the book of Exodus (xiv. 22.) that the Red Sea through which the Israelites passed, was divided before them; that the waters stood up like a wall on each side, and that they passed through *on dry ground*; but sprinkled by the spray of the sea, or by drops from the cloud that went alternately behind and before them. While then we readily admit that the Greek word *Baptizo*, translated to baptize, frequently means to immerse, it is equally certain, from the passages to which we have called your attention, that it also signifies to *sprinkle*, to *pour*, and to *wash*. Whether, therefore, the nature of baptism, the command under which the Apostles went forth to evangelize all nations, or the signification attached to the word baptize in the sacred scriptures, be duly considered, it is certain that the mode in which that ordinance ought to be performed is not designated.

But perhaps it may be thought, even admitting the correctness of the above conclusion,

that there is sufficient evidence to show that the various baptisms performed by the Apostles, as narrated in the Acts, were by immersion, and that they therefore regarded that as the only mode authorized by Christ. Let us examine this subject candidly, bearing in mind the fact, that we are not contending against *immersion*; but the principles of those who maintain that this is the only proper mode, and that baptism performed otherwise is not valid.

The first baptism, that we read of, after the Apostles were commissioned to preach the "gospel to every creature," and after Christ's ascension, was on the day of Pentecost. According to the prophecy of Joel, and the promise of Christ, that another comforter should be sent, after his departure to the Father, the divine spirit was then poured out upon the Apostles, whereby they were endowed with the gift of tongues, so that those who were assembled together at that noted festival, from every nation under heaven, heard them speak in their own tongues, wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God. Peter standing up with the eleven, delivered one of the most eloquent dis-

courses recorded in holy writ, which was concluded in this manner—"therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Then they that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Here we find that three thousand were baptized in a single day, and we maintain that it would be utterly impossible, for twelve men to immerse that number, in so short a period. Nor only so. St. Peter did not commence preaching until the "third hour," that is, nine o'clock in the morning according to our computation of time, and if, as is commonly supposed, we have merely the outlines of his discourse, the probability is that it was noon, or nearly so, before he concluded, so that in reality only six hours of the day remained, for the baptizing of three thousand souls. This shows that it could not have been by immersion.* To avoid this conclusion, I know it has

* To say nothing of the improbability of supposing that the three thousand persons could be provided with suitable changes of raiment to be baptized by immer-

been supposed, that the seventy disciples assisted the twelve Apostles. But for this opinion there is not the least authority. The commission to baptize was given to the twelve alone, and there is not the least intimation that the seventy ever baptized. The design of their appointment was to go "before our Lord's face into the cities and places whither he himself would come" to prepare the way for his reception, and nothing more. Upon the whole, then, as three thousand were baptized in six hours, and as we have no authority for believing, that any but the twelve Apostles were engaged in the administration of that ordinance, the only reasonable conclusion that can be adopted, is, that it was performed by sprinkling.

The baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch by Philip, the deacon, recorded in Acts, viii. is confidently appealed to, as an instance of immersion. This might be admitted, without the

sion in six or eight hours, it is very uncertain whether the brook Kidron, which was the only stream in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, would afford a sufficient quantity of water to immerse, at the feast of Pentecost. That stream has generally but little water, and often none. See Robinson's Calmet.

least prejudice to our faith and practice; for a single baptism so performed, would not establish that, as the only scriptural mode, when many instances might be brought, where a different mode had evidently been adopted. Let us, however, examine the case before us. The Eunuch, returning from Jerusalem, was reading a prophecy of Isaiah referring to Christ. Philip, directed by the spirit, joined himself to him, and explained that prophecy; "And as they went on their way they came to a certain water, and the Eunuch said, see, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And after making a confession of his faith in Christ, "they both went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him." It is by no means certain from this, that the Eunuch was immersed, and those who assert that he was, assume what ought to be proved. If they both went down *into* the water, as is implied by the English translation, Philip may have taken up a little water in his hand, and so poured, or sprinkled it upon him. And it is remarkable that the prophecy which the Eunuch was reading, when Philip met him, made mention "of sprink-

ling many nations," which doubtless suggested the subject of baptism to his mind, and induced him to exclaim, "see, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?*" This interpretation is corroborated by another circumstance. It is said of Philip, as well as the Eunuch, that he went down into the water, and came up out of the water, and yet the most that is believed respecting him is, that he went down into the water sufficiently far to baptize; why then should we believe that the one was immersed, when we are ready to acknowledge that the other was not, the same language being employed in reference to both? Besides, it is a well known fact, that the prepositions translated "into" (*eis*) and "out of" (*ek*) are variously used. They frequently signify *near* and *from*, so that it is by no means certain, from the original, whether Philip and the Eunuch actually went down into the water, or merely went down to the margin of the stream.† The truth is, when all these

* The prophecy which the Eunuch was reading began at Isaiah lii. 13, and Philip *began* at the same scripture.

† For example, Go thou (*eis*) "to," not "into" the sea, Matt. xvii. 27. I am not sent but "unto" (*eis*) the lost

facts are duly considered, it is very uncertain whether this baptism was by sprinkling or immersion.

The baptism of the Jailor, and his household at Philippi, is worthy of consideration. Acts, xvi. 25. 34. The circumstances connected with it, are as follows. Paul and Silas were cast into prison—at midnight they sang praises unto God,—suddenly the foundations of the prison were shaken by an earthquake, and all the doors were opened, and every man's bands were loosed. The keeper of the prison, alarmed at this, drew his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then after calling for a light, and inquiring of Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?—he was baptized, he and all his, straightway." There is not the least intimation, that the Jailor, and his family, went to a neighbouring river to be immer-

sheep of the house of Israel—Matt. xv. 24. He (Jesus) went up (eis) "into"—i. e. "upon" a mountain, Matt. v. 1. And lo, a voice "from" (ek) heaven saying, this is my beloved Son. Matt. iii. 17.

sed, and then returned again to the prison; but there are several circumstances which, render such a supposition, improbable, I might rather say impossible. This baptism took place at midnight, and it is not to be supposed that the jailor, at the peril of his life, would liberate Paul and Silas. He had received strict charge respecting them, and had "thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks;" and we find that he was about to kill himself on seeing the prison doors open. Nor is it reasonable to believe, that the Apostles, who had been beaten with many stripes, and who were not, therefore, in a fit condition to immerse, would depart from the prison by stealth; for we are expressly informed that they refused under any circumstances to do so, on the following day, until they had been regularly brought out by those in authority. Considering these facts, the probability is, that the jailor and his household, were not immersed. There are many other baptisms recorded in the Acts, such as the baptism of Saul, of Cornelius, and of Lydia, and her household; but it is not necessary to refer to them, inasmuch as there are

no facts connected with them, which have any bearing on the point under consideration. In conclusion then, we have seen, that there is nothing in the nature of baptism which makes immersion essential to its validity, that the command to baptize is indefinite as to the mode in which it ought to be performed, that the word baptize means both to sprinkle and to dip, and that while the case of the Eunuch, at first sight, seems to favor immersion, there are several other instances which can be explained only on the supposition, that sprinkling was practised by the Apostles. The conclusion to which we arrive, is this—that while it is important that baptism be received according to Christ's institution, it is immaterial whether it be performed by sprinkling or immersion. This is the ground taken by the Church, of which it is our happy lot to be members, and we believe that it is agreeable to the word of God.

There is a common objection, (the only one of consequence that we are aware of,) frequently brought against the views which have been advocated by the preceding remarks, which, before concluding, we will answer.

“It is said our blessed Saviour was baptized by immersion in the river Jordan, by John the baptist, and that we ought to follow his example.”

I. In reply to this objection, we remark, that it is exceedingly questionable whether we are required in every respect to follow his example. He was circumcised, and constantly attended the services of the Jewish church. In these respects it will not be contended that we are to follow his example. Admitting, therefore, that he was immersed, it does not follow that we must be, before we can be his disciples.

II. Besides, it is by no means certain, that our Lord was immersed, for the reasons which were stated in the case of the Eunuch, which are also applicable to Christ's baptism. John came baptizing *with*, and not *in* water—the element was applied to the body, and not the body to the element.

III. But above all, we contend that the baptism which Christ received, was not Christian baptism, and has not therefore the least bearing on that point.*

* “It was,” says Chrysostom, speaking of John's baptism—“as it were a bridge, which from the baptism

This is evident from the following considerations:

1. John was sent by God the Father. John i. 33. He was neither sent by Christ, nor authorized by him to baptize, how then could his baptism be Christian baptism?

2. John's baptism was a preparatory rite, "a baptism of repentance," to prepare mankind for the reception of Christ, and nothing more. Matt. iii. 11. Luke iii. 34. John i. 31. Acts xix. 4.

3. Some of those who were baptized by John, were again baptized by the Apostles, which would have been improper, if they had received Christian baptism in the first instance. Acts xix. 1. 5. Made probable also from Matt. iii. 11. compared with Acts i. 5. 11. 41.

4. Those that were baptized by John did not possess proper qualifications to receive Christian baptism,—they were not believers. They had not received the gift of the Holy Ghost, neither had they heard that there was a Holy Ghost. Acts xix. 2. 4. And it is contrary to

of the Jews, made a way to that of the Saviour; it was superior to the first, but inferior to the second."

Scripture for adults to receive Christian baptism while they are unbelievers. Mark xvi. 16. Acts ii. 38.

5. John's baptism was confined almost entirely to the Jews. Matt. iii. 5. 7. Mark i. 5. Luke iii. 3. Christian baptism, on the contrary, was designed for all nations. Matt. xxviii. 19.

6. Christian baptism is a mark of profession, by which the disciples of Christ are designated from the world. Mark xvi. 16. But He had no disciples before he entered on his public ministry, and yet John baptized before this. Matt. iii. 1. 6. 11. Mark i. 78. John i. 26. 28.

7. Christian baptism is a rite of initiation into the Christian Church. Gal. iii. 27. But John baptized before the Church of Christ was established, and before Circumcision, and other Jewish rites were abrogated, which fact shows that the baptism which he administered, was not Christian baptism.

8. An essential quality of Christian baptism, is to be baptized by a particular form, viz:—"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,"—but John used no form, at least we have no evidence that he did. These

facts show, that the baptism of John, is essentially different from that which Christ instituted, and which we are to receive; and if so, the baptism of Christ, by John, is not to be held up for our example, any more than his circumcision.*

I. If it is agreeable to the will of God, as has been satisfactorily shown, that infant baptism is to be retained in the Church, we insist that it is the duty of parents to bring their children to Holy baptism; suggesting for their serious consideration, whether a positive sin be not committed by neglecting or refusing to comply with that duty. Baptism is to be regarded as the foundation of a Christian education—it places the child in a most responsible relation—it enables the parent to present a gospel motive of faith and obedience—it is the first thing which ought to be done, to bring up your children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” It is to

* Candor requires me to state that there is one passage, which at first sight, seems to lead to a different conclusion, to wit,—John iv. 1. 2. As it was common, however, for *proselytes* to receive baptism, the disciples of Christ adopted the same course, and baptized, though not with Christian baptism.

be feared, that Christian parents generally, do not reflect as they ought, on the importance of baptism, and the responsibilities assumed thereby. Too many regard it as an unmeaning ceremony, or at least as a rite of but little significancy,—they think it is well enough to have their children baptized, because their parents adopted the same custom;—but the devout Christian has more exalted ideas of this sacrament. He regards it, not only as a means of grace, but as an ordinance of God's own appointment, by which all the promises of His covenant are visibly sealed, ratified and confirmed. As soon, therefore, as the seal of God's covenant, has been placed on the infant's brow, he regards it no longer as his own, but as the child of God, who is in duty bound to continue His faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end. To secure that result, he labours diligently, fervently imploring Almighty God to crown his efforts with success. Nor is this more than a parents bounden duty. For when children are baptized,—unable of themselves to promise to keep God's holy will and commandments, by reason of their tender age, their parents or

sponsors, moved by a sincere desire to make them partakers of the “life that now is, and of that which is to come,” undertake this work, and labour of love for them. They promise in their behalf, that they “shall renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; that they shall believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and that they shall keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life.” These promises, which are made in the presence of Almighty God and his congregation, ought sedulously to be performed. Accordingly, the Church in the Baptismal office, in an exhortation, sums up the duties of sponsors in this wise: —“Forasmuch as this child hath promised by you, his sureties, to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve him; ye must remember, that it is your parts and duties to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons; and

chiefly, ye shall provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." In this part of the exhortation, there are several things worthy of observation. The child is to be taught, "so soon as he shall be able to learn." Here the importance of early religious instruction, is most clearly recognized. Begin with the first dawn of reason to instruct your children. Tell them they are God's children. Remind them of the solemn vow, promise and profession, which they have made. Explain to them the nature of baptism. Tell them of the exalted privileges with which they have been blessed. Show them the impropriety of living, as the world, in the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Strive by adapting the truth to their tender minds—"giving line upon line and precept upon precept,—in the morning sowing thy seed, and in the evening withholding not thy hand,"—to bring them up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Nor can this authority be delegated to others;—the Sunday School Teacher, the Catechist, or even those

who are "over you in the Lord;" for you are required "to see that the infant be taught." The instruction to be imparted is to be through your own instrumentality and effort. There is another duty suggested:—"And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons." The devout Christian feels the need of instruction in righteousness. He believes that it is God's ordinance for the saving of the soul. He therefore becomes a diligent attendant of the house of God; and as soon as his children are capable of understanding, and hearing sermons, without disturbing the congregation, he brings them to the house of God, instructs them in the beautiful service of the Church, and teaches them to lift up their hearts and voices to God in prayer and praise. How delightful is it to behold the Christian parent and his children, on every occasion of divine service, entering into the temple of God, and falling low before His footstool. Where this is the case, we may humbly hope, that the preached word will bring forth the fruit of good living. In addition to this, parents are "chiefly to provide, that their children may learn the

Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." The Creed is a brief summary of Christian doctrine, which was composed by the Apostles, according to some, or as is more probable, in the first or second century, by men who correctly understood the "Apostles fellowship and doctrine." The Lord's Prayer, is that beautiful form of devotion, which our blessed Saviour gave to his disciples, and which we are commanded to use to the end of time. The Ten Commandments, given to the Jews by God himself, have never been annulled, and are consequently proper to be impressed on the youthful mind. Nor are these the only topics of instruction. Your care and bounden duty is, to "teach them all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health."

Nor would the Church have you to make your children formalists, giving them merely a knowledge of the doctrines of inspiration, without showing that religion is practical in its nature, and beneficial in its results,—affecting both the heart and life. Hence the exhortation con-

cludes:—"And that this child may be virtuously brought up, to lead a godly and christian life; remembering always, that baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died, and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living." Think then, Christian parents, of the responsible relation which you sustain to God, to the Church, and to your children. Reflect on the blessings which may result from your efforts, and pray that God, who has inclined your hearts to devote your little ones to him, may give you grace to acquit yourselves as faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God.

II. A word to those who have been baptized, particularly the young, and then we will conclude. By baptism you were made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven. This then is the condition in which you are placed; by baptism you have

put on Christ, and are of necessity a member of his Church militant, having the responsibilities of the Christian covenant resting upon you, with the means of grace and hope of glory within your reach. Of these things you have frequently been reminded, and yet how many of those who have been thus dedicated to the Lord, are in the broad way which leadeth to destruction. Think for a moment, baptized youth, of the earnest desire of your parents, that you might be partakers of the life that now is, and that which is to come! Scarcely had you received your being from God, before they brought you to his altar, and religiously devoted you to his service. They knew, that durable happiness is not to be attained in the world, and, therefore, they placed you in the arms of His sovereign mercy. They read, as if written by the finger of God, "those that seek me early shall find me," and, therefore, they brought you to Holy baptism. How many prayers—if they have done their duty faithfully, have they offered up in your behalf, that you might crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin, and thus become

a living member of Christ's Holy Church! How many tears have they shed over the waywardness and inconsideration of youth! How earnestly have they watched over your paths, and observed the developement of those faculties which the God of nature and grace hath bestowed! To come up to the measure of duty, and acquit the conscience before God, you are to "renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and all the sinful desires of the flesh; to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, as contained in the Apostles Creed; and to keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life."

Baptized into the mystical body of Christ, how imperious the obligation which rests upon you, to live as members of Christ, and children of God; taking his word for your guide, complying with its precepts, and daily growing in all the graces of the Spirit. Received into the congregation of Christ's flock, you were signed with the sign of the cross, in token that you should not be ashamed to confess the faith of

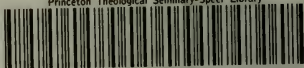
Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto your life's end. The seal of God's covenant has been placed upon you. "You cannot, if you would, escape from the responsibility of this relation. You may forget it; you may hate to think of it; you may despise it;" you may forfeit by a profane and sinful life, the blessings which result from it—but still the obligation lies upon you—you cannot avoid it—you cannot throw it off:—it will cling to you through life; it will follow you through the dark valley of the shadow of death; and if not saved, it will increase your misery in the world to come.

Brought within the sacred enclosure of the Church, the least that you can do, is to "remember your Creator in the days of your youth,"—and to walk answerably to your Christian profession. She expects from you, fidelity, devotion to her dearest interests, and perseverance in every good work. Bring then no disgrace on our most holy religion. Do not live under the serious responsibilities incurred by baptism, and cry, "Lord, Lord," while yet he is denied by

infidelity, or a life of pleasure, and of sin. The conditions of that covenant, which has been sealed, ratified and confirmed, God for his part will most assuredly keep and perform: labour therefore, lest a promise being left of entering into that rest, which remaineth for the people of God, any of you should fail to enter in because of unbelief. Think now, as you undoubtedly will, at the latest period of life, of the importance of working out your salvation with fear and trembling. May God incline your hearts to do this, for Christ's sake; to whom be glory, now and ever.—AMEN.



Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01021 5160